UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1786
5 December 1994

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Cooperation between United Nations and CSCE is vital to maintenance of peace and security in Europe, Secretary-General tells Conference summit in Budapest.

+ Secretary-General leaves Budapest for Montreal with Canadian Prime Minister, after meetings with Czech President and United Kingdom Foreign Secretary.

+ Security Council says any unilateral act to establish sovereign Abkhaz entity violates commitments assumed in search for political settlement of Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.

+ Russian Federation vetoes draft resolution by which Security Council would have reconfirmed measures regulating transport of goods between Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ Secretary-General recommends Security Council redefine safe-area regime in order to protect civilians and ensure humanitarian deliveries; says areas should be clearly delineated and completely demilitarized.

+ Agreement on re-establishment of essential services in Croatia is step towards peace in former Yugoslavia, Secretary-General says.

+ General Assembly commends efforts of President Aristide and governmental bodies to lead Haiti out of crisis; urges international community to increase support for Haitian development.

+ United Nations opens Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance.

+ Asia-Africa Forum to be held in Bandung, Indonesia, from 12 to 16 December.

* * *

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) is vital to the maintenance of regional peace and security, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In an address to the CSCE summit meeting in Budapest, Hungary, today, he described the relationship between the Organization and the Conference as privileged. He noted that the Conference had more than 50 members, including four of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The Secretary-General recalled that the United Nations and the CSCE had signed a framework agreement on cooperation and coordination in May 1993. In the course of operations, CSCE and United Nations officials had learned how to work together more effectively. In The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, they had been able to implement an important agreement on preventive diplomacy at a very early stage.

In the former Yugoslavia, the United Nations was clearly playing the leading role, he continued. However, the CSCE had made important contributions. It had dispatched missions to avoid an extension of the conflict to The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as it had earlier done in Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina. The CSCE had also established an office at Sarajevo, to which the United Nations provided logistical support. He added that the situation in the former Yugoslavia could only be resolved through negotiation and dialogue.

* * *

Following his address to the CSCE summit, the Secretary-General had a meeting with United Kingdom Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd. They discussed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly in Bihac. The Secretary-General informed Mr. Hurd on the contacts being pursued with the two sides by Special Representative Yasushi Akashi, with a view to obtaining a cease-fire and a stabilization of the military situation. The Secretary-General also met with Czech President Vaclav Havel. They discussed the celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and the Czech Republic's role in the Organization, particularly regarding its membership in the Security Council.

The Secretary-General later co-chaired a meeting of representatives of the CSCE and international organizations. That meeting was convened by Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Martino; Hungarian Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs, incoming Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE; and Swiss Foreign Minister Flavio Cotti. He later left Budapest for Montreal with Prime Minister Jacques Chretien of Canada, where he will participate in ceremonies marking the anniversary of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Yesterday, the Secretary-General had meetings with Hungarian President Arpad Gonez, Belgian Foreign Minister Frank Vandenbroucke, and Georgian Foreign Minister Alexander Chikvaidze.

* * *

(more)

The Security Council has said that any unilateral effort to establish "a sovereign Abkhaz entity" would violate commitments assumed by that side in the search for a comprehensive political settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. In a statement read out by its President, Manzi Bakuramutsa (Rwanda), on Friday night, the Council expressed deep concern over a 26 November statement attributed to the Supreme Soviet of Abkhazia, Republic of Georgia, relating to the establishment of such an entity. The Council reaffirmed its commitment to the Republic's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Council called on all parties, particularly the Abkhaz side, to make substantive progress in negotiations for a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict, including on the political status of Abkhazia. Expressing great concern at the continued obstruction of the return of refugees and displaced persons, it called on the Abkhaz party to take all necessary measures, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to ensure their speedy and organized voluntary return.

* * *

At another Security Council meeting on Friday night, a draft resolution which would have reconfirmed resolutions regulating the transport of goods between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and Bosnia and Herzegovina was vetoed by the Russian Federation. Thirteen Council members voted in favour of the draft, while China abstained.

The Russian representative, Sergei Lavrov, said adoption of the "untimely" draft would have wiped out the recent economic agreement between the Krajina Serbs and the Croatian Government and undermined the negotiating process. Instead, he went on to say, the positive approach of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) should be encouraged by a suspension of resolution 820 (1993).

The Permanent Representative of China, Li Zhaoxing, said that while he supported the provision of the draft that called for unimpeded access for United Nations personnel to perform their tasks, he could not agree that Chapter VII of the Charter should be invoked on the question of sanctions against the former Yugoslavia. The representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ivan Misic, said the draft resolution would have sent the message that strategic resources like fuel directed to the so-called Krajina Serbs could not be used for war pursuits and violations of international law, nor be used for the benefit of the Bosnian Serb party. Council members who failed to support the draft would be associating themselves with Knin and Pale authorities, he added.

* * *

The Secretary-General has recommended that the Security Council redefine the regime of safe areas with a view to protecting the civilian population and ensuring the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In a report dated 1 December, he said the safe areas should be clearly

(more)

delineated and completely demilitarized. Demilitarization should be accompanied by the cessation of hostilities and provocative acts in and around the areas. He added that the ability of one party to maintain troops and weapons within a safe area created an unstable situation and drew attacks from the opposing party.

Until complete demilitarization could be achieved, the party controlling a safe area should be obliged to refrain from attacks or provocative actions directed against targets outside the area, the Secretary-General continued. No weapons or weapons systems, or military headquarters or installations, should be located within a safe area. Meanwhile, complete freedom of movement for the local population, as well as for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and humanitarian agencies, should be guaranteed.

UNPROFOR should not be mandated to enforce compliance with the safe-area regime, the Secretary-General said. The use of force that would be necessary to implement such a mandate would prevent the Force from carrying out its overall mandate in the former Yugoslavia, turn it into a combatant, and further destabilize the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He went on to say that the Council should demand that all parties agree without delay on certain concrete steps to ensure compliance with the modified safe-area regime. It should also mandate UNPROFOR to define the operational boundaries of the safe areas with or without the agreement of the parties.

* * *

An agreement on economic issues concluded between the Government of Croatia and the Krajina Serb authorities will have a beneficial political effect on the situation in the former Yugoslavia, according to the Secretary-General. The agreement was signed by the parties and the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, in Zagreb and Knin on Friday. It provides for the re-establishment of water and electricity services, the re-opening in Croatia of the Zagreb-Belgrade highway, and the re-opening of the oil pipeline through the Krajina.

In a statement to the press in Geneva on Saturday, the Secretary-General noted that the economic agreement followed the agreement on a cessation of hostilities which had been concluded last March and which continued to be generally observed. It was thus a second step towards a resolution of the conflict in Croatia, and was something for which the Organization has been working since the establishment of the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) in 1992.

The Secretary-General said the next step was to prepare a negotiating process on the outstanding political issues, and urged the parties to cooperate with the Co-Chairmen in that endeavour. He went on to say that the Krajina Serb authorities had agreed on Friday to withdraw their military personnel from the Bihac pocket in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and stressed that that should be done without delay.

* * *

(more)

The General Assembly today paid tribute to the efforts of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and governmental bodies to lead Haiti out of crisis. In a resolution adopted without a vote, the Assembly urged the international community and organizations to increase their technical, economic and financial cooperation to support Haitian development, and efforts to strengthen institutions guaranteeing democracy and respect for human rights. It also requested the speedy return to the country of all members of the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH).

Also today, as the Assembly discussed restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, the representative of India presented the results of informal consultations on funding of operational activities for development. Member States had agreed that substantially increased resources, provided on a predictable and assured basis, were needed to fund those activities, he said. An over-reliance on a few major donors made the current funding system vulnerable.

* * *

A Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance, established by the Secretary-General, has been officially opened. Contributions received will support United Nations activities relating to land-mines, including clearance, surveys, training and mine-awareness education. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs is responsible for overall management and implementation of the Fund.

In a report to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General said such a fund would greatly enhance the effectiveness of the international community's response to mine problems. He pointed out that more than 110 million land-mines were scattered in 64 countries, and that more than 800 people were killed by them every month. "Land-mines may be one of the most widespread, lethal and long-lasting forms of pollution we have yet encountered, and we are currently losing the battle to protect innocent civilians from their effects", he added.

* * *

"Promoting Sustainable Development in Africa: Sharing Experience with Asia" will be the main theme of the Asia-Africa Forum, which will take place in Bandung, Indonesia, from 12 to 16 December. The Forum is part of the follow-up to the 1993 Tokyo International Conference on African Development. It is being organized by the Governments of Japan and Indonesia, the Global Coalition for Africa, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations through the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries.

The Forum aims to stimulate cooperation between Asian and African countries through direct dialogue between decision makers and institutions. It will also enhance South-South cooperation, building on the results of the Tokyo Conference.

* *** *